

AMENDED IN SENATE APRIL 26, 2005

AMENDED IN SENATE MARCH 31, 2005

**SENATE BILL**

**No. 580**

**Introduced by Senator Escutia**  
**(Principal coauthor: Senator Alarcon)**

February 18, 2005

---

An act to amend Section 382.1 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to the Public Utilities Commission.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 580, as amended, Escutia. Public Utilities Commission: Low-Income Oversight Board.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities and can establish its own procedures, subject to statutory limitations or directions and constitutional requirements of due process. Existing law establishes a Low-Income Oversight Board to advise the commission on low-income electric and gas customers issues and to serve as a liaison for the commission to low-income ratepayers and representatives. Existing law specifies the membership of the board.

This bill would expand the duties of the board to include advising the commission on low-income water customer issues and to serve as a liaison for the commission to those low-income ratepayers and representatives. The bill would increase the membership of the board by 2 persons selected by the commission, the first with expertise in the low-income community and who is not affiliated with any state agency or utility group, and the second who is a representative of a water corporation.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

SECTION 1. Section 382.1 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

382.1. (a) There is hereby established a Low-Income Oversight Board that shall advise the commission on low-income electric, gas, ~~telecommunications~~, and water customer issues and shall serve as a liaison for the commission to low-income ratepayers and representatives. The Low-Income Oversight Board shall replace the Low-Income Advisory Board in existence on January 1, 2000. The Low-Income Oversight Board shall do all of the following to advise the commission regarding the commission's duties:

(1) Monitor and evaluate implementation of all programs provided to low-income electricity, gas, and water customers.

(2) Assist in the development and analysis of any assessments of low-income customer need.

(3) Encourage collaboration between state and utility programs for low-income electricity and gas customers to maximize the leverage of state and federal energy efficiency funds to both lower the bills and increase the comfort of low-income customers.

(4) Provide reports to the Legislature, as requested, summarizing the assessment of need, audits, and analysis of program implementation.

(5) Assist in streamlining the application and enrollment process of programs for low-income electricity and gas customers with general low-income programs, including, but not limited to, the Universal Lifeline Telephone Service (ULTS) program.

(6) Encourage the usage of the network of community service providers in accordance with Section 381.5.

(b) The Low-Income Oversight Board shall be comprised of 11 members to be selected as follows:

(1) Five members selected by the commission who have expertise in the low-income community and who are not affiliated with any state agency or utility group. These members shall be selected in a manner to ensure an equitable geographic distribution.

(2) One member selected by the Governor.

1 (3) One member selected by the commission who is a  
2 commissioner or commissioner designee.

3 (4) One member selected by the Department of Community  
4 Services and Development.

5 (5) One member selected by the commission who is a  
6 representative of private weatherization contractors.

7 (6) One member selected by the commission who is a  
8 representative of an electrical or gas corporation.

9 (7) One member selected by the commission who is a  
10 representative of a water corporation.

11 (c) The Low-Income Oversight Board shall alternate meeting  
12 locations between northern, central, and southern California.

13 (d) The Low-Income Oversight Board may establish a  
14 technical advisory committee consisting of low-income service  
15 providers, utility representatives, consumer organizations, and  
16 commission staff, to assist the board and may request utility  
17 representatives and commission staff to assist the technical  
18 advisory committee.

19 (e) The commission shall do all of the following in  
20 conjunction with the board:

21 (1) Work with the board, interested parties, and  
22 community-based organizations to increase participation in  
23 programs for low-income customers.

24 (2) Provide technical support to the board.

25 (3) Ensure that the energy burden of low-income electricity  
26 and gas customers is reduced.

27 (4) Provide formal notice of board meetings in the  
28 commissions' daily calendar.

29 (f) (1) Members of the board and members of the technical  
30 advisory committee shall be eligible for compensation in  
31 accordance with state guidelines for necessary travel.

32 (2) Members of the board and members of the technical  
33 advisory committee who are not salaried state service employees  
34 shall be eligible for reasonable compensation for attendance at  
35 board meetings.

36 (3) All reasonable costs incurred by the board in carrying out  
37 its duties pursuant to subdivision (a), including, staffing, travel,  
38 and administrative costs, shall be reimbursed through the public  
39 utilities reimbursement account and shall be part of the budget of  
40 the commission and the commission shall consult with the board

- 1 in the preparation of that portion of the commission's annual
- 2 proposed budget.

O